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Stan Lee PRESENTS:

CALL OF THE WILD

MIDNIGHT, AND URGENT HOOFBEATS RATTLE DOWN AN ALLEYWAY OF ALEHOUSES IN TARANTIA, CAPITOL OF ANCIENT AQUILONIA...

BY ISHTAR AND ASHTORETH, THERE'S WHERE WE'LL FIND CONAN THE KING--!

SILVESTRI • SHERWOOD

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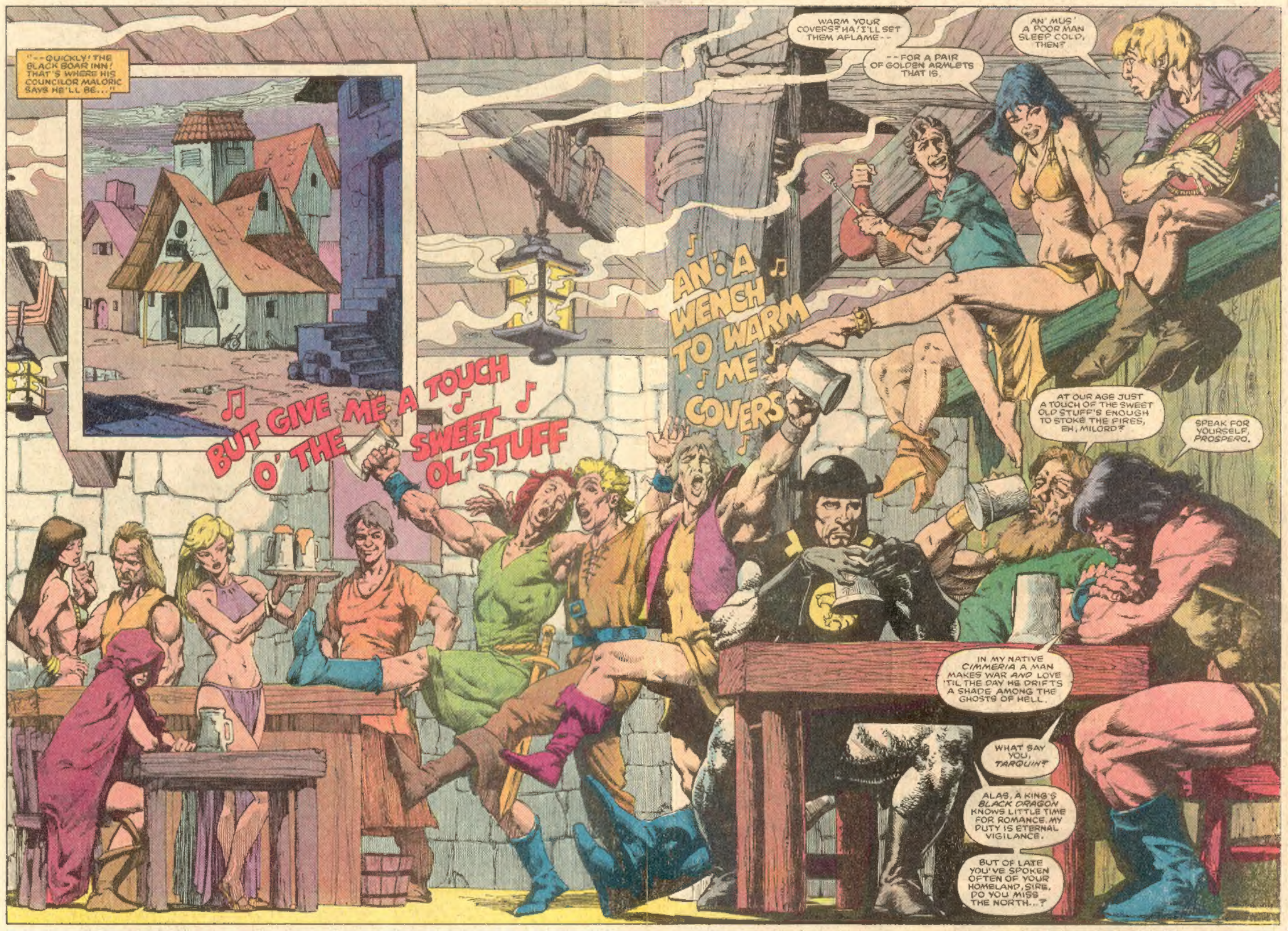

"--QUICKLY! THE BLACK BOAR INN! THAT'S WHERE HIS COUNCILOR MALORIC SAYS HE'LL BE..."
♫ BUT GIVE ME A TOUCH O' THE SWEET OL' STUFF ♫
♫ AN' A WENCH TO WARM ME COVERS ♫
WARM YOUR COVERS? HA! I'LL SET THEM AFLAME--
--FOR A PAIR OF GOLDEN ARMLETS THAT IS.
AN' MUS' A POOR MAN SLEEP COLD, THEN?
AT OUR AGE JUST A TOUCH OF THE SWEET OLD STUFF'S ENOUGH TO STOKE THE FIRES, EH, MILORD?
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, PROSPERO.
IN MY NATIVE CIMMERIA A MAN MAKES WAR AND LOVE 'TIL THE DAY HE DRIFTS A SHADE AMONG THE GHOSTS OF HELL.
WHAT SAY YOU, TARQUIN?
ALAS, A KING'S BLACK DRAGON KNOWS LITTLE TIME FOR ROMANCE. MY DUTY IS ETERNAL VIGILANCE.
BUT OF LATE YOU'VE SPOKEN OFTEN OF YOUR HOMELAND, SIRE. DO YOU MISS THE NORTH...?

WE MUST SEE KING CONAN!

WHO--?

AND THEY DON'T SEE THROUGH MY FALSE BEARD--

THEY LOOK LIKE SHEMITE SOLDIERS, CONAN--

BAH! ONLY THAT FOOL MALORIC COULD HAVE GIVEN OUT THE NAME OF OUR SECRET HAUNT TO STRANGERS--

THERE'S NO KING HERE!

AN' YE'RE DISTURBIN' OUR PEACE!

SO OUT WITH YE NOW--

--'LESS'N YE WANT A PAIR OF SORE BACKSIDES, YE MEDDLIN'--

HOLD, TARQUIN IF IT'S THE KING THEY WANT--

--THE KING THEY'LL GET.

MITRA'S NAME!

NOW CLEAR THIS TAVERN AT ONCE, YOU WINE-SOAKED DOGS--ALL SAVE THE MEN OF SHEM--

--YOUR KING COMMANDS YOU!

BY YOUR LEAVE, MAJESTY, WE HAD NO IDEA--

LEAVE OFF YOUR JABBERING AND GO, MAN!

YOU THERE, FELLOW, ARE YOU EARLESS BENEATH THAT COWL?

CROM! DO YOU NEED A HERALD AND TRUMPET!?

OUT!

KLOP

NOW, MAN, IT HAD BEST BE SOMETHING SERIOUS BROUGHT THIS DISTURBANCE PAST MIDNIGHT--

MOST GRAVE, YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS.

WE ARE SOLDIERS OF QUEEN AYELET OF SHEM, WHO RECENTLY DEPARTED FROM HER STATE VISIT TO YOUR REALM. WENDING SOUTH THROUGH OPHIR, OUR PARTY WAS AMBUSHED BY BRIGANDS.

OUR FELLOWS ARE ALL SLAIN AND THE QUEEN'S CARRIED AWAY!

LET'S OFF, TARQUIN! AYELET IS OUR TRUSTED FRIEND AND ALLY!

REIN IN YOUR STALLIONS, CONAN.

YOUR ALLEGIANCE TO AYELET IS ADMIRABLE, BUT YOU CANNOT EVER HI-HO AND AWAY.

UNLESS YOU'VE FORGOTTEN, THERE'S THE SMALL MATTER OF A KINGDOM FOR WHICH YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE, A COUNCIL OF BARONS, A COURT OF LAWS, A STANDING ARMY...

...NOT TO MENTION A FAMILY OF YOUR OWN, A LOVELY WIFE AND CHILDR--

ENOUGH, PROSPERO! TARQUIN, TAKE A SQUADRON OF DRAGONS AND GO WITH THE MEN OF SHEM-- FIND AYELET!

AT ONCE, MY LORD!

DAWN...

BAH! WHAT'S ONE NIGHT AWAY FROM THE CASTLE...

...WHEN MORNING BRINGS ONCE MORE THE BURDENS OF RULE AND THE STIFLING ROBES OF STATE?

I'LL GRANT THERE IS A CERTAIN PREDICTABILITY TO A MONARCH'S DAYS, CONAN.

ALL PART OF THE GAME OF POWER.

I WISH...

...DO YOU KNOW, PROSPERO... IN MY WANDERING DAYS EACH DAWN PROMISED EVER NEW ADVENTURE.

BEFORE I WORE A CROWN, THE VOICES OF THE WILDERNESS CALLED TO ME LIKE FRIENDS...

LET'S NOT GET MUSHY, CONAN.

LISTEN, I CAN THINK OF A LOT WORSE THINGS THAN BEING KING.

HERE, THIS ALE OUGHT TO MAKE YOU FEEL--

--MY LORD--!?

HMF. WHERE'D HE TROT OFF TO?

I MEANT TO REMIND HIM TODAY'S THE *PRINCESS RADEGUND'S* BIRTHDAY, AND TONIGHT'S HER CONFIRMATION IN THE TEMPLE OF MITRA.

HE HAS TO PRESENT HER A GIFT THERE.

AH, WELL, THEY SAY A BARBARIAN NEVER FORGETS.

WHILE...

AQUILONIA'S A PRISON...

...AND MY HEART YEARNS FOR THE DAYS I BURNED WITH LIFE...

...WHEN I WAS THIEF, A MERCENARY AND BRAWLER--

--NO KING, MAYHAP, BUT MY OWN MAN AT LEAST.

ARGH! MY HEAD THROBS WITH ALL THIS THINKING.

HNH?

A CARELESS MAN LIVES A SHORT LIFE.

WHO'S THAT!? I'LL SKEWER THEE--

DEAF-EARS IS IT, FROM THE INN--?

CROM'S GUTS! NO LIVING SOUL'S EVER CREPT UP ON ME LIKE THAT BUT ONE--

--AND SHE A FLAME-TRESSED DEVIL FROM HYRKANIA'S STEPPES NAME OF *RED*--

ERLIK'S BLOOD, WHAT ARE YOU GAPING AT, YOU SLACK-JAWED CIMMERIAN OAF?

VA NOS

MEANWHILE, THE ROYAL CASTLE...

A BOOK OF POEMS FROM GUIGEMAR AND A HARP FROM MOTHER.

EVERY COURTIER AND FRIEND REMEMBERED MY BIRTHDAY...

...ONLY FATHER'S NOT GIVEN ME ANYTHING...

...NOT EVEN A WORD OF GREETING.

WAIT, I MUST HAVE OVERLOOKED THIS JEWEL CHEST BEFORE.

PLEASE LET THIS BE FATHER'S SPECIAL GIFT.

HOW BEAUT-

HAAIEE

OH' MITRA PROTECT ME - A DEMON!

HEH HEH HEH' SURPRISE!

IT'S ONLY A MAGICAL ILLUSION I CONJURED!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SISTER RAVEDUNI!

TAURUS GET OUT OF HERE YOU YOU

YOU HORRID CRUEL NASTY LITTLE BRAT!

A MILE CANYON [illegible]

SO YOU STILL EARN YOUR LIVING BY SELLING YOUR BLADE, GIRL?

CROM, I'LL NEVER FORGET HOW WE BREACHED THE TREASURE TOWER OF MAKKALET, OR THE TIMES WE HAD TOGETHER IN ZAMORA!

BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE FIRE BURNING UNDER YOU, SONJA.

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, WHY MUST YOU RIDE OFF SO SOON? MAYHAP I CAN ASSIST--

I TOLD YOU [illegible] AN I MEANT [illegible] A TAVERN HERE IN ARGOLONIA [illegible]

WHEN I SAW YOU IN THE INN BY ACCIDENT..

I AM CURSE ME, BUT I COULDN'T HELP FOLLOWING TO GREET YOU FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE.

CALL ME A HOPELESS ROMANTIC, BARBARIAN.

NOW ON YOUR WAY!

GET BACK TO YOUR COURT OR YOUR HAREM OR WHEREVER YOU KINGS PARK YOUR ROYAL RUMPS ALL THE DAY LONG.

RED SONJA NEEDS NO MAN'S ASSISTANCE.

GODS, LOOK AT YOU, CONAN ABOUT TO WHIMPER LIKE A LOST PUP.

HAVE THEIR USES

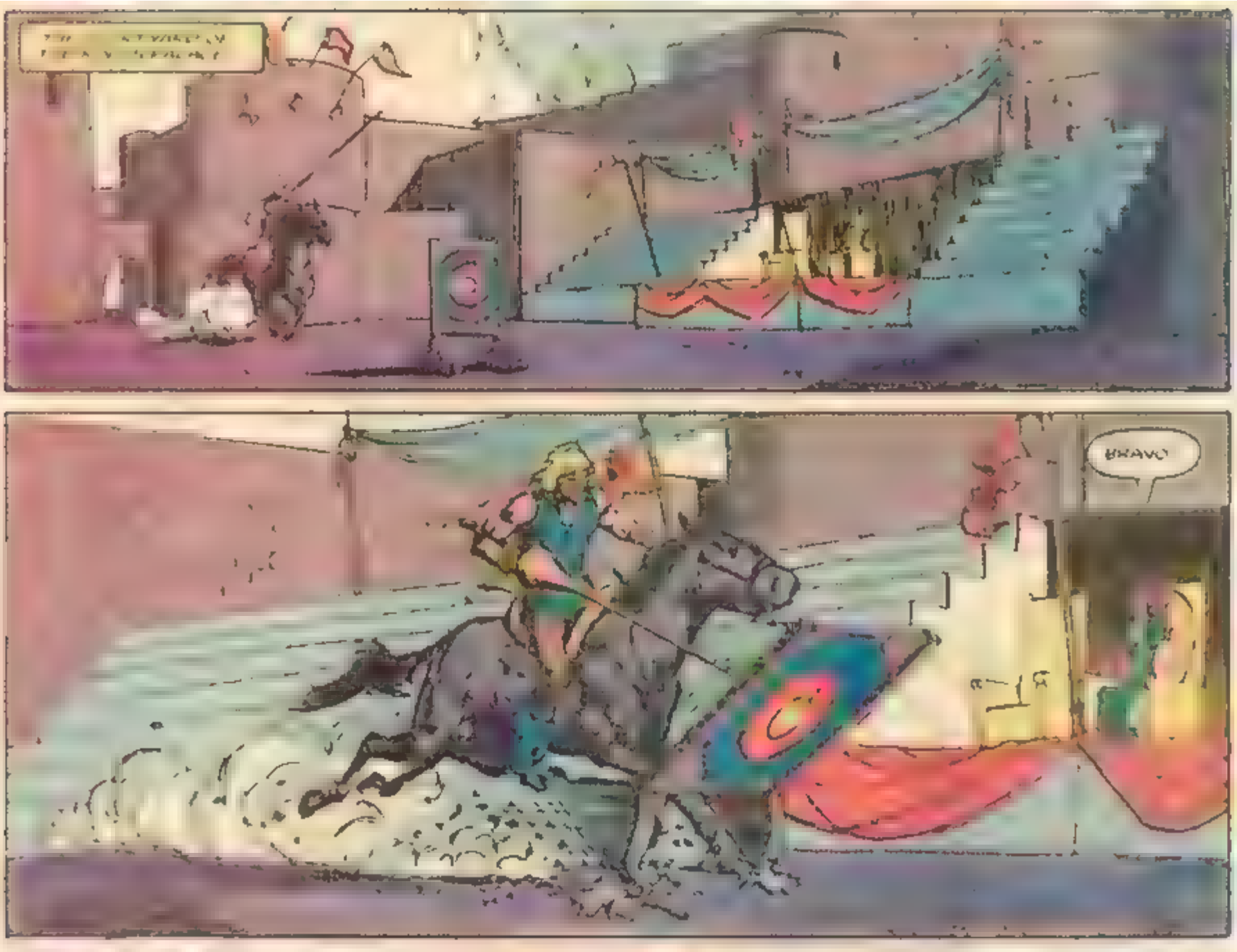
IT ATTRACTS TOO MUCH ATTENTION.

STILL, IF YOU'VE NO BARBARIAN'S FEAR OF THINGS S[illegible]PERNATURAL - - OR AN OLD MAN'S

FOLLOW ME

AN OLD MAN

CROM, THE YEARS HAVE NOT DULLED THE EDGE OF YOUR SHARP TONGUE, GIRL!


BRAVO!

LYSANDER!

YOUR KNIGHTLY PROWESS WILL BE THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE TOURNAMENT TO CELEBRATE KADEGUND'S BIRTHDAY
MITRA KNOWS, THERE'S NO MORE SWEET APPLAUSE THAN YOURS, QUEEN ZENOBIA
I'D LIE AT THE MOON ITSELF TO WIN YOUR PRAISE, MILADY

... I AM WELL CONTENT TO HAVE THE QUEEN INSTEAD

TO BE APPOINTED YOUR PERSONAL GUARD, I MEAN, DEAR LADY, AS THE KING HIMSELF HAS BID.

PRINCESS RADEGUND, YOUR HUMBLE SERVANT.

MOTHER, HAVE YOU ANY IDEA WHERE FATHER IS?

HE PASSED THE NIGHT OUTSIDE THE CASTLE WALLS, RADEGUND

I'VE NOT SEEN HIM SINCE WHY?

OHH!

NOTHING.

I JUST HOPE SOMEONE REMINDS HIM IT'S HIS DAUGHTER'S BIRTHDAY

AND HE'S AT LEAST SUPPOSED TO PRESENT HER A GIFT IN THE TEMPLE TONIGHT

I MEAN NOT TO SPEAK OUT OF TURN, MY QUEEN--

WOULD THAT MY HUSBAND WERE AS SENSITIVE AS YOU TO OTHERS' FEELINGS--

--FORGIVE ME, LYSANDER I SHOULD NOT HAVE I MISSPOKE...

FEAR NOT, MILADY, YOUR WORDS GO NO FARTHER THAN THIS YARD.

--BUT METHINKS THE DOTING DAUGHTER WOULD BENEFIT FROM HER FATHER'S ATTENTION EVERY SO OFT.

THE KHOROTAS RIVER?

WHAT IN THE NAME OF SEVEN DEVILS COULD BE WORTH RISKING YOUR PRETTY NECK FOR ON THESE WATERS SON-YA?

YOU'LL SEEN SOON ENOUGH.

IT SEEMS I VE HEARD THAT BEFORE, GIRL

DO YOU DOUBT ME, BLACKMANE?

LOOK BEHIND YOU.

CROM'S BONES!

A DEATH BARGE!
YOU DON'T INTEND TO DISTURB THE SLEEPING DEAD WOMAN?

CONAN, CONAN YOU TALK TOO MUCH.

HERE, TIE THIS GRAPPLE TO YOUR WAIST AND FOLLOW ME

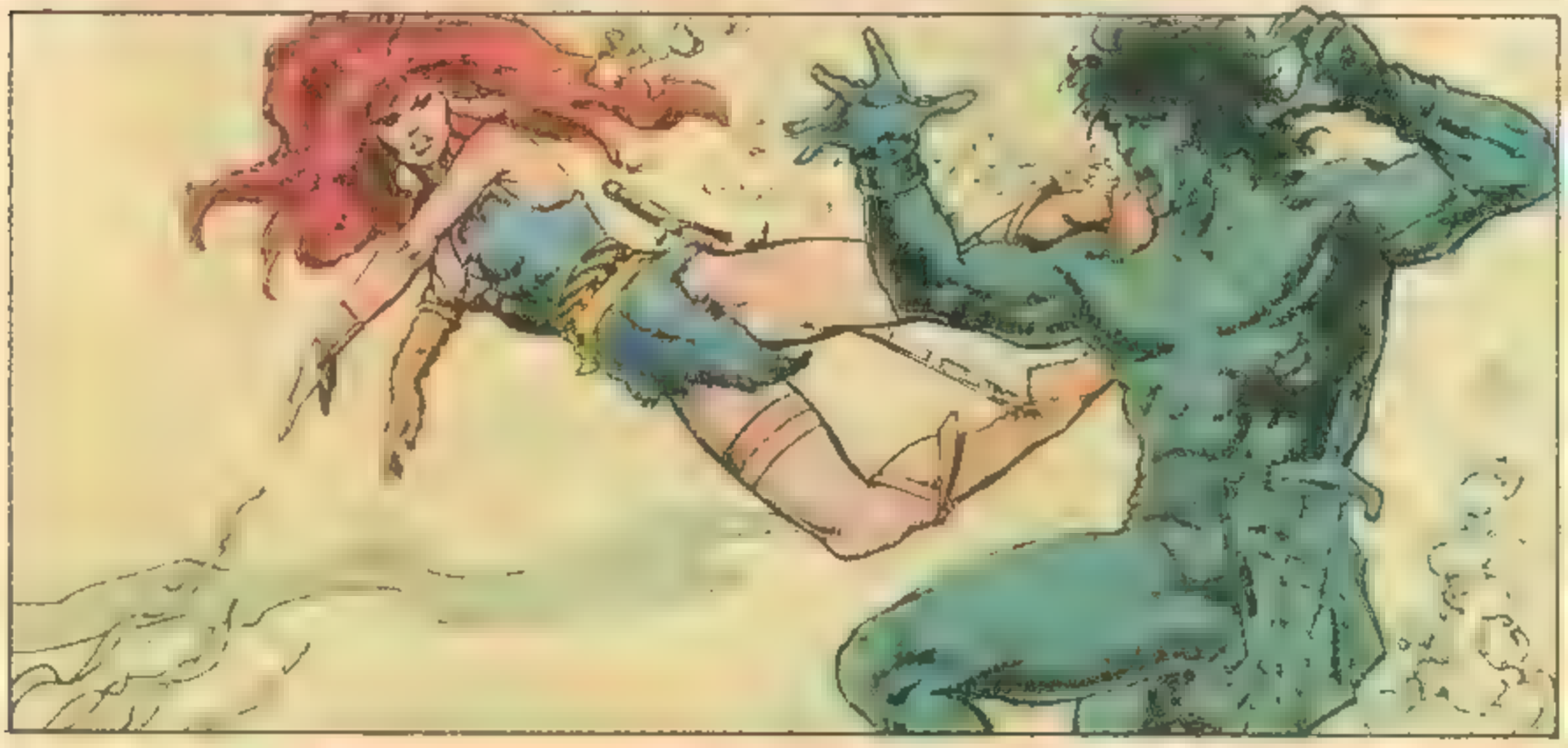
HA! YOU GIVE ORDERS LIKE ROYALTY, YOU PEVIL CAT, WHEN IT'S I M THE MONARCH.

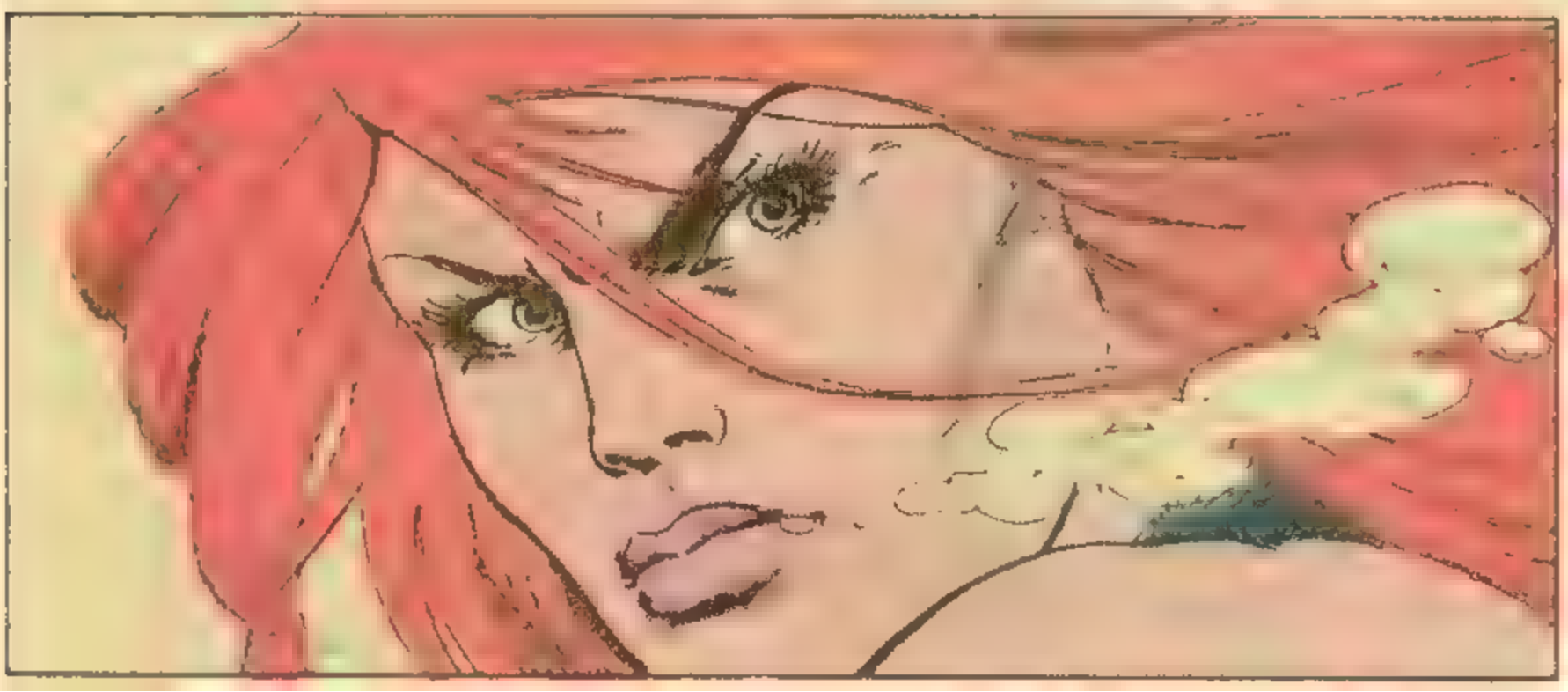
HOUNDS OF ERLIK I TOLD YOU BEFORE, I NEED A BARBARIAN, NOT A KING

NOW ARE YOU COMING, MAN?

TRY TO STOP ME.

I'D SWIM TO HELL AND BACK AFTER THOSE SHAPELY LEGS OF YOURS, GIRL!





YOU STILL PACK THE KICK OF A MULE,

YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TRY TO PAW ME, CIMMERIAN

NOW HURRY THE GRAPPLE

TUNK

NAY GIRL, LET ME

I'LL MAKE FOR THE HOLD.

DON'T GIVE ME ADVICE!

I KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR, MAN?

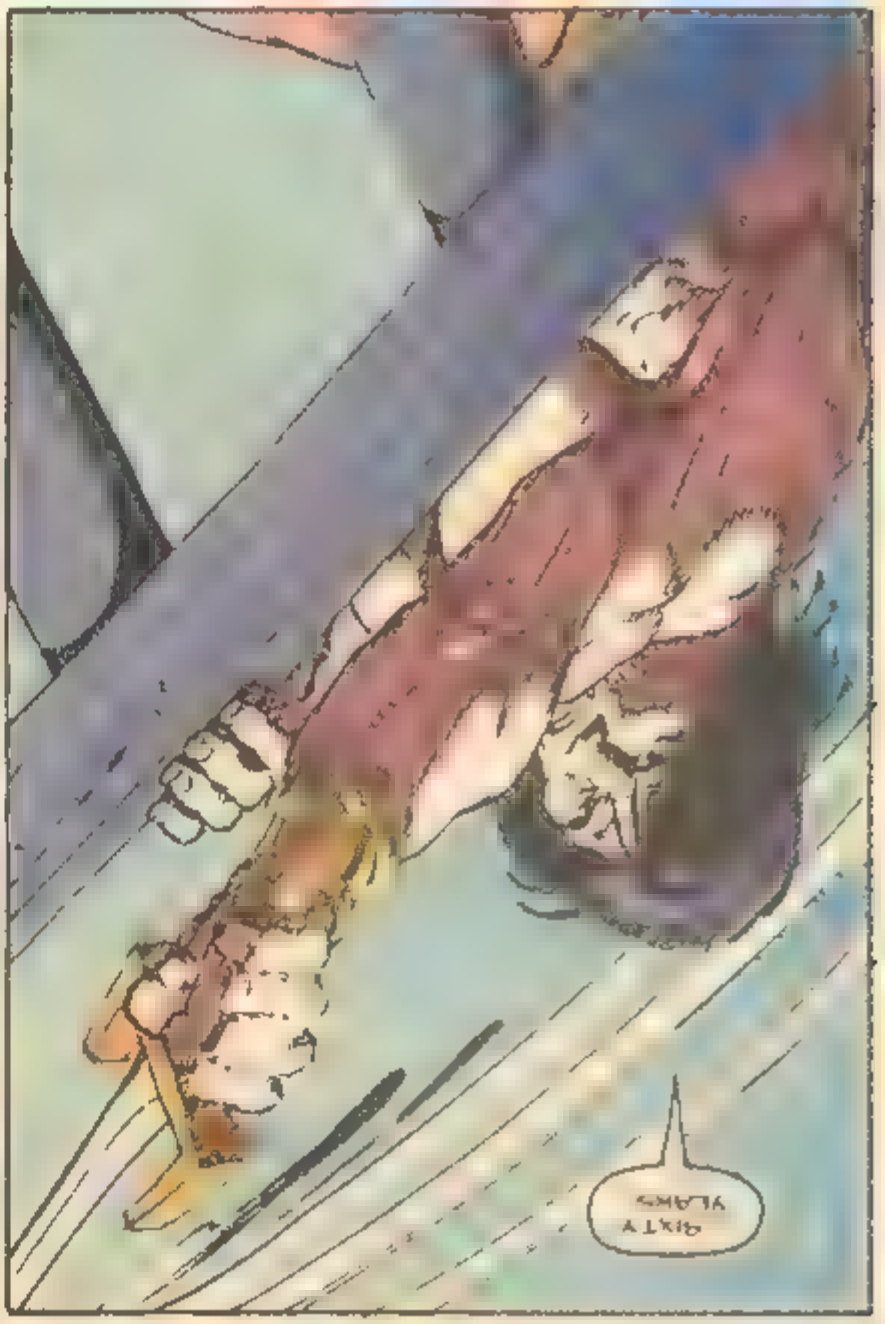
KUSH TE GUARDSMEN?

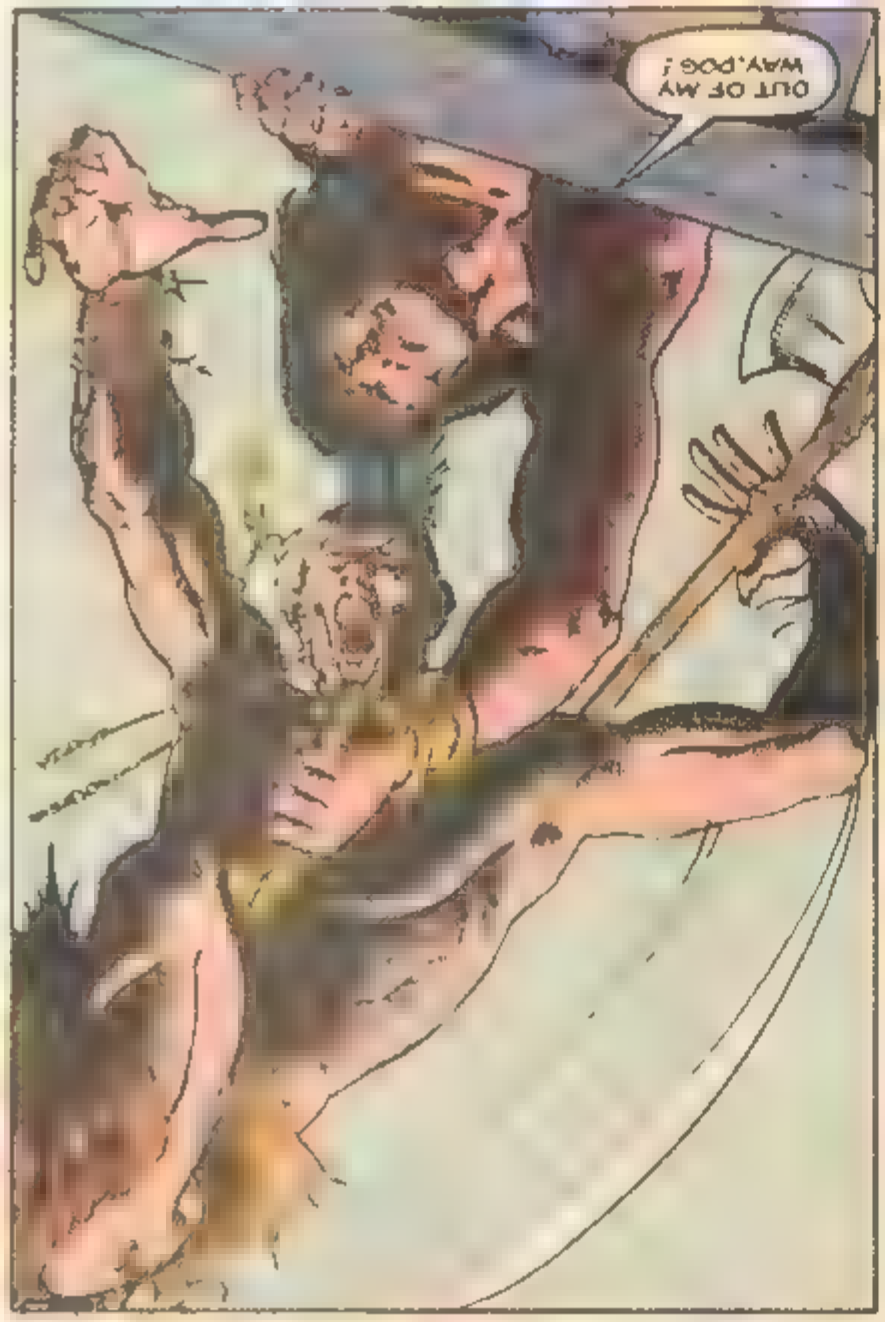
BESIDES YOU'LL SERVE BETTER TO HOLD OFF THE KUSHITE GUARDSMEN.

WHAT
GIRL?

SAID
BUT OLD

AHOAH?


QUIET V'LAHK


OUT OF MY WAY,DOG!

I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND YOU GIRL

... NOT IF I LIVE ANOTHER...

HA MY TRESMEN HAD A SAYING IN THE NORTHLANDS...

"IT'S BUT ONE SHORT STEP FROM BEING GUARDIAN OF THE DEAD...

TO BECOME A CORPSE YOURSELF

BELOW

SO HERE YOU SLEEP THE DARK SLEEP, ONE EYED MAGE.

I'LL TRY NOT TO DISTURB YOUR DREAMS OF OBLIVION, NECROMANCER.

BUT I'VE ALREADY HAD A PURSE OF GOLD AND THERE'S ONE PURSE WAITING.

IF I BRING THE RARE JEWEL YOU WEAR BENEATH THAT PATCH BACK TO A WEALTHY PATRON OF OPHIR.

AND HERE'S MY PRIZE

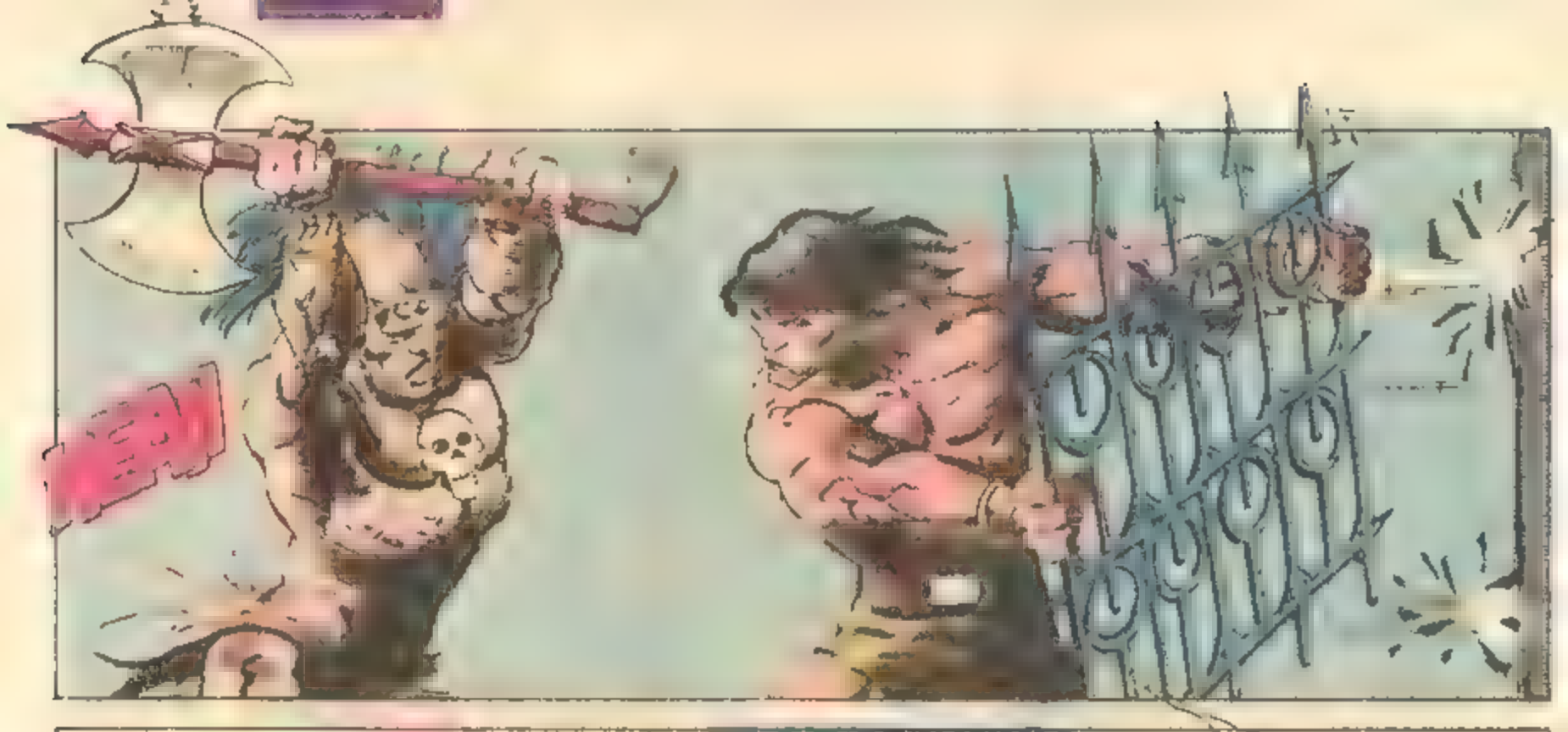
GODS! THAT WAS EASIER THAN DUPING CONAN INTO LENDING HIS BLADE AND BRAWN TO THE OCCASION.

TARIM'S BLOOD!

WHAT ASHEN HORROR OUT OF HELL--?!

CROM CURSE ME FOR A WHITE-FROCKED NURSEMAID--

--TO YOUR BLACK HEART! UNPH!


YAIEE

WELL SONJA, YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH TIME GIRL!

WILL YOU HURRY IT UP DOWN HERE--?
HELL'S DEVILS!

SON · YA !

CO NANGH -

TIS DEMON SPAWN BUT COLD STEEL CAN BREAK ITS SPELL!

THOUGH IT YET POURS FORTH AND STINKS LIKE FLESH O' NI TO MAGGOTS!

YOU'RE FREE, GIRL!

QUICK! ADD YOUR BLADE TO MINE!

THE HORROR COMES FOR ME AGAIN!

CONAN, SAVE YOURSELF--NO!

IT WRAPS ITS SMOKY TENTACLES AROUND YOU AS WELL!

THAT'S IT, SON! YA THIS IS DEVIL SMOKE RISEN OUT OF HELL!

LISTEN TO ME--!

HACK AT THESE PLANKS AS THOUGH THEY WERE EVERY MAN WHO EVER TRIED TO RUN HIS FINGERS THROUGH THOSE SCARLET TRESSES OF YOURS, GIRL!

YOU FOREMOST AMONG THEM, CIMMERIAN!

THE BILGE WATER WILL DO THE REST AND DOUSE THAT ASHEN MONSTROSITY.

TALONS OF ERLIK CONAN, YOU IMPRESS ME SOMETIMES

--FOR A NORTHLAND SAVAGE.

HA! AND YOU SON OF A STRAY BLOOD AS THOUGH HE WERE A STRIPLING AGAIN

THEN YOU'D BEST KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

I'VE GOT WHAT I CAME FOR I WANT ONLY THIS.

BUT YOU MIGHT CHOOSE A BAUBLE --

HA, WHAT AM I SAYING? YOUR THIEVING DAYS ARE OVER

...AND THE TREASURY OF AQUILONIA'S FULL ENOUGH I'LL WAGER, KING CONAN.

STILL, GIRL, I'LL HAVE A TOKEN LIKE YOU SAID...

FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE

THE MOON'S RISEN ALREADY!

I SWEAR, 90N-YA, TIME WINGS LIKE AN EAGLE WHEN IT'S PASSED IN GOOD SPORT.

NOW WHERE TO?

LET'S FIND A TAVERN WHERE YOU CAN DANCE LIKE A SHE-DEVIL 'TIL DAWN.

WHILE I'LL DRINK THE INNKEEP DRY AND SING YOUR NAME.

MAYBE, CONAN, BUT--OH, I'VE LEFT THE GRAPPLING LINE IN THE BOAT. COULD YOU--?

WHERE?

I SEE NO GRAPPLE HERE, GIRL.

THEN LOOK, MAYHAP IT'S FALLEN INTO THE WATER.

HUH?

WHAT'S PAST IS PAST, CIMMERIAN.

YOU'RE A KING NOW. YOU'VE NO BUSINESS WITH A SELL-SWORD AND WANDERER.

GOODBYYYYYYYY

NO!

SON-YA, WAIT!

WAIT FOR ME!

BONG BONG BONG

WHOAAH! THOSE ARE THE EVENING BELLS OF MITRA'S TEMPLE?

BONG

BONG

BONG

BONG

I'LL NEVER FORGIVE HIM! NEVER! NEVER!

OH WHY DOESN'T HE LOVE ME, MOTHER?

HUSH, DEAR, PLEASE, I'M... CERTAIN SOMETHING... URGENT'S HELD YOUR FATHER.

OH MY MORTAL EYES, PROSPERO, HERE COMES THE PRIEST OF MITRA AGAIN. WHAT SHALL I DO?

TELL HIM CONAN WENT OFF TO SPEND THE DAY IN THE WOODS FASTING AND MEDITATING.

AND IF HE BELIEVES THAT COUNCILOR PUBLIUS, I'VE A PROVINCE IN THE SOUTH I'D FANCY TO SELL HIM. HA!

UM... YES... MOST SACRED MINISTER OF MITRA... WELL, YOU SEE, YES... AS PROSPERO RELATES IT, THE KING'S--

--ARRIVED TO CELEBRATE THE PRINCESS RADEGUND'S CONFIRMATION, PRIEST.

NOW LET'S ON WITH THE CEREMONIES.

MITRA BLESS YOU, DAUGHTER, ON THIS DAY.

OH, FATHER... MY... MY...

...A THOUSAND SOUL-FELT THANKS, SIRE.

"BY MY MORTAL EYES, ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, EH, PROSPERO?"

DO I STEAL THE WORDS RIGHT OUT YOUR MOUTH, PUBLIUS?

BONG

BONG

BONG

FIN